

Daniel Milosavljevic

University of Otago,
New Zealand

The power of *pibroch*: emotion and the classical music of the Scottish highland bagpipes

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In Gaelic, the term *piobaireachd* (anglicised as *pibroch*) literally means piping, or what pipers do. However in recent times the term has come to represent the classical music of the Scottish Highland bagpipes, traditionally known as *Ceòl Mór*. Today *pibroch* still holds its literal meaning, but is widely used in bagpipe culture to refer to *Ceòl Mór*. *Pibroch* has a hazy history, but is thought to have been a musical style for the Scottish Highland bagpipes for over 500 years. *Pibroch* was a music historically written for and performed within contexts of celebration, mourning, victory, or warfare (amongst others). As a result individual pieces have associated stories that allow people to interpret emotion during a performance, and some of these stories come to be seen by some as highly emotional and ‘moving’. Today, significant changes have affected *pibroch*: where the highland clan system no longer exists; where there are now international enclaves of *pibroch* performance; and where romanticisation, editorialising and ‘empire’ have led to diverse interpretations of bagpiping and *pibroch*. As a result, the performance contexts of *pibroch* in contemporary society have also changed. Today *pibroch* is a music mostly maintained in competitive performance cultures, especially strong in Scotland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand. This presentation will focus on the interpretation of emotion in association with *pibroch* performance, and the role that this process plays in maintaining *pibroch* cultures, particularly within Australia and New Zealand.

Keywords: *pibroch*; *piobaireachd*; bagpipe; emotion; *Ceòl Mór*

Format: Single paper (#265)